Russian Soviet Government Bureau
(1919-21)

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The Russian Soviet Government Bureau was an agency of the Soviet government, established in the United States to serve as a procurement agency and clearing house for news and press releases from the Russian Republic. The bureau was headed by Ludwig C.A.K. Martens, who entered the United States a German subject before being named Soviet representative in America early in 1919.

On June 12, 1919, the "New York Joint Legislative Committee Investigating Seditious Activities," chaired by Sen. Clayton R. Lusk -- known to history as the "Lusk Committee" -- obtained a search warrant directed against the Manhattan office of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau, located at 110 W 40th Street. The raid was conducted that same day by the Committee in association with the New York state constabulary, and a large number of documents were removed from the building to the headquarters of the Lusk Committee,

In the course of its public hearings in the fall of 1919, the Lusk Committee subpoenaed Ludwig Martens to testify before it. Martens, under claim of diplomatic immunity, refused to heed the subpoena and was arrested and taken to New York City Hall on Nov. 14, 1919, where he was released upon posting of $1,000 bond. He subsequently appeared before the Committee, testifying that he had received some $90,000 from Soviet Russia to fund the operations of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau, but declining to name names as to the identity of those who provided this money. Martens was cited for contempt by the Chairman of the Committee but left the jurisdiction before this proceeding against him was completed. Martens' secretary, Santeri Nuorteva, was similarly called before the Committee and declined to answer, was likewise cited for contempt and left the jurisdiction. Michael Mislig, an associate of Martens and Nuorteva and Secretary of the Russian Federation was similarly called before the Lusk Committee and cited for contempt for refusing to answer its questions. He, too, fled the jurisdiction of the Committee.

(fn. Stevenson (ed.), Lusk Committee Report, v. 1, pp. 27-28.)

Official Organ

The first publication of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau was a weekly information bulletin, first published on March 3, 1919. A total of 13 issues were produced, with the final issue appearing on May 26. This weekly bulletin seems to have been intended as a sort of regular press release for the use of recipient periodicals.

PRICE, TEN CENTS

SOVIET RUSSIA

A Weekly Devoted to the Spread of Truth About Russia

Vol. I. NEW YORK, June 7, 1919 No. 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

To the Reader.

The Russian Soviet Government Bureau came to the view that an expanded magazine targeted to a broader readership was called for, and on June 7, 1919, a 16-page magazine called *Soviet Russia: A Weekly Devoted to Spread the Truth About Russia* was launched. According to its editor, Soviet Russia was intended "to acquaint the People of the United States with the real conditions in Russia and to combat the campaign of deliberate misrepresentation which is being waged by enemies of the Russian workers..." The magazine was intended to be the voice of the Soviet government abroad rather than a tool of the domestic American communist movement. "There is nothing secret, sinister, or opprobrious about this publication," the editor asserted. On the contrary, it was contended that a handful of publications "more or less secretly financed by Russian counter-revolutionists" were the ones responsible for the real "sinister and insidious propaganda" -- an effort to "seduce and bully the people of America to spend their money and their lives in the reestablishment in Russia of that rule of the few."

Officials and Employees

GENERAL OFFICE STAFF

The "Commercial Representative" of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau was **LUDWIG C.A.K. MARTENS**. (1919 photo from *NY Call*) -- see also photo **below R**). Martens was born in Bachmut in Ekaterinoslav Province, Russia, on Dec. 20, 1874. He was a graduate of the Petrograd Technological Institute, a mechanical engineer by training. He originally came to the United States as the agent of the Demidoff Count San Donato Co. of Perm, Russia. He was also the Vice President of Weinberg and Posner Engineering Co. of New York.

GREGORY WEINSTEIN was the Secretary to Martens and General Office Manager of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau. He was born in Russia in 1880 and was a graduate of the University of Geneva, Switzerland. A journalist by trade, Weinstein held a Master of Science degree and a degree in law. Weinstein went to work at the RSGB on April 7, 1919. Weinstein was also listed as one of three editors of the final issue of *The Class Struggle,* which was published as the theoretical magazine of the new Communist Labor Party.

SANTERI "SANTTU" NUORTEVA (née Alexander Nyberg, **above L**) was the Secretary of the Bureau. Nuorteva was born in Viborg, Finland, in 1881 and attended the University of Helsingfors. During the period 1907-11 he was a member of the Finnish parliament. In the United States he was an active member of the Finnish Socialist Federation and edited several of its newspapers. He was named representative of the Finnish Revolutionary government early in 1918 and established the Finnish Government Bureau in New York in March of that year. After the defeat of the Finnish Revolution in May 1918, he became one of the leading exponents of the Bolshevik Revolution in America. He was appointed to the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on March 18, 1919.

KENNETH DURANT was the Assistant Secretary of the Bureau. Durant was an American, born in Philadelphia in 1889 and was a graduate of Harvard University. During the war he was an employee of George Creel's Committee on Public Information, working as the assistant director of the news division in Washington, DC, and later with the foreign

press and cable division in New York, Paris, and Rome. Durant went to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on June 16, 1919.

MARY MODELL was a translator and secretary at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau. She was a Russian, born in 1896, and was a graduate of the First Kursk Gymnasium for Girls. She came to work for the RSGB on April 7, 1919.

DOROTHY KEEN was the private secretary to Santeri Nuorteva. She was an American, born in Boston in 1898, and a graduate of high school in New York City.

ALEXANDER COLEMAN was a file clerk. He was an American, born in Fitchburg, MA, in 1899. He attended high school in Fitchburg and New York City before coming to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on April 7, 1919.

BLANCH ABUSHEVITZ was a telephone clerk at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau. She was born in Vilna, Lithuania, and was a graduate of the Vilna Gymnasium. She also passed the New York Board of Regents High School examination. She went to work at the RSGB on April 15, 1919.

NESTOR KUNTZEVICH was an office attendant. He was a Russian, born in Volyn, Russia, in 1889. He went to work at the RSGB on January 4, 1919.

LT. COL. BORIS LEONIDOVICH TAGUEEF ROUSTAM BEK was employed at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau as a "military expert." Bek was a Russian, born in Petrograd in 1871. He was an 1891 graduate of the Petrograd Naval School and served with the 6th Orenburg Cossacks during the Pamir Military Expedition, 1891-95. During the Grecko-Turkish War of 1897 he served as a military correspondent at Turkish headquarters. Bek was the chief editor of the Russian Army and Navy Almanac from 1898-1900. During the Russo-Japanese war he was at Port Arthur and in Manchuria with Generals Kuropatkin and Stoessel. In 1914 he was appointed Lt. Col. in the British Volunteer Army and later was a military specialist writing on the staff of the London Daily Express. He came to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on Jan. 1, 1920.

COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT

A.A. HELLER was the Director of the Commercial Department. Heller was a naturalized American, born in Russia in 1879. He graduated from the Commercial College of the City of Moscow and later studied at Harvard University. His family was in the jewelry business and he worked in Paris and New York City. Heller's formal job title was that of General Manager of the International Oxygen Co. of New Jersey. He came to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on April 7, 1919.

ELLA TUCH was the secretary of the commercial department. She was a naturalized American, born in Riga, Latvia (Russian empire) and worked previously in a patent law office and as manager of a corporate stenographic office. She went to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on April 7, 1920.

ROSE HOLLAND was a clerk and stenographer for the commercial department. She was an American, born in New York City and attended New York University for one year before working as office manager for the Gary School League. She came to work at the RSGB on May 12, 1919.

HENRIETTA MEEROWICH was a clerk for the commercial department. She was a Russian, born in Libau, Courland (Russian empire) and a graduate of the Libau Girls Gymnasium. From 1911-19 she worked as a social worker before coming to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on April 15, 1919.

ROSE BYERS was a stenographer and clerk for the commercial department. She was a Russian citizen, born in Kiev, Ukraine (Russian empire), and was a graduate of Kiev Gymnasium. She came to work at the RSGB on July 30, 1919.

VLADIMIR OLCHOVSKY was a statistician and draftsman working for the commercial department. He was a Russian citizen who had attended the Cadets' School at Nizhni Novgorod before going on to the Military Engineering School at Petrograd and the Gatchina Aero-Nav. School at Gatchina. During the war he was a superintendent of airplane construction plants at Briansk and Kiev and held the rank of Captain in the Russian Army. He came to work at the RSGB on April 15, 1919.

TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT

ARTHUR ADAMS was the Director of the Technical Department. Adams was a British citizen, a graduate of the Kronstadt School of Science and held a M.E. degree from the University of Toronto in Canada. Adams came to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on June 22, 1919.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

WILLIAM MALISSOFF was the Director of the Educational Department.Malissof was a naturalized American who was born in Ekaterinoslav, Russia. He held B.S., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from Colombia University and had been a teacher of chemistry and researcher in that field at Columbia. He came to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on Nov. 1, 1919.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

LEO A. HEUBSCH was the Director of the Medical Department. Heubsch was a Russian citizen, born in Vinniza, Russia. He was a graduate of the University of Odessa and earned his M.D. in 1907 at the University of Yuriev in Russia. In 1915 he was licensed to practice medicine and surgery in New York State. He came to work at the RSGB on April 24, 1919.

D.H. DUBROWSKY was born in Kiev, Ukraine (Russian empire) in 1888. He received his M.D. from Fordam College and worked as a statistician for the Russian Ministry of Ways and Communications from June 1918 to April 1919. He came to work at the RSGB on April 16, 1919.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

MORRIS HILLQUIT, well known Socialist Party leader born in Riga, Latvia (Russian empire) was officially on the staff of the Legal Department but was unable to participate for reasons of health. His appointment to the Russian Soviet Government Bureau came on March 18, 1919.

ISAAC A. HOURWICH served as Acting Director of the Legal Department, as well as Director of the Department on Labor and Statistics. Hourwich, the father of future Communist Party founder Nicholas I. Hourwich, was a naturalized American, born in Russia. He studied at the University of St. Petersburg and earned a L.L.M. degree from Demidoff Lyceum of Jurisprudence, Yaroslavl, Russia, in 1877. Hourwich was admitted to the Russian bar in 1887, in Illinois in 1893, and in New York in 1896. From 1891-92 he was a fellow at Columbia University and earned a Ph.D. there in 1893. He was a member of the editorial staff for the comparative law bureau of the American Bar Association, and worked as a translator at the US Mint from 1900-02. During 1902-06. Hourwich worked as an expert special agent for the US Bureau of the Census. He was a statistician for the NY Public Service Commission, 1908-09, and worked as an expert special agent in charge of mining at the Bureau of the Census, 1909-13. He was appointed at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on April 16, 1919.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS

ISAAC A. HOURWICH was the Director.

EVA JOFFE was a statistician. She was a naturalized American citizen, born in Bachmut, Russia. She had attended graduate school at Columbia University and the New York School of Social Research, and worked as a special agent for the Bureau of the Census in 1910. During 1911-12 she was a statistician for the New York Factory Investigating Committee, and worked in 1913-14 as chief of staff of the wage scale board for the dress and waist industry. From 1915-18 she was a statistician for the National Child Labor Commission, before coming to work at the RSGB on April 16, 1919.

ELIZABETH GOLDSTEIN was a stenographer for the Department of Economics and Statistics. She was a naturalized American who had been born in Russia and graduated high school and business college in Boston, MA.

EDITORIAL STAFF OF SOVIET RUSSIA

JACOB W. HARTMANN was the Managing Editor of *Soviet Russia*. Hartmann was an American, born in Brooklyn, NY, in 1881. He earned a B.S. degree from City College of New York in 1901, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1912. From 1901-19 he worked as an instructor in language and history at the College of the City of New York, before going to work at the Russian Soviet Government Bureau on April 7, 1919.

RAY TROTSKY was a stenographer and translator for *Soviet Russia*. She was a Russian citizen, born in Suvalki, Russia, and a graduate of Suvalki Gymnasium. She came to work at the RSGB on April 28, 1919.

THEODORE BRESLAUER was a translator for *Soviet Russia*. He was a Russian citizen, born in Lodz, Poland (Russian Empire) in 1886. He earned a Doctor of Law degree from the University of Heidelberg, Germany, in 1910, and went to work at the RSGB on April 7, 1919.

VASILY IVANOFF was a mailing clerk for *Soviet Russia*. He was a Russian citizen, born in Russia in 1898, and had attended the Graduate School of Navigation, Arkhangelsk, Russia. He came to work at the RSGB on Dec. 8, 1919.

DAVID OLDFIELD was a clerk at *Soviet Russia*. He was a Russian, born there in 1885, and was educated in Petrograd and Paris before coming to work at the RSGB on Aug. 20, 1919.

I. BLANKSTEIN was a translator for *Soviet Russia*. He was a Russian citizen, born in Russia in 1896, and came to work at the RSGB on June 1, 1919.

HOME

DOWNLOADABLE DOCUMENTS

1919

MARCH 1919

"Consul of Russian Republic Here to Open Trade with US; Authorized to Spend $200,000,000: His Official Statement of Conditions Lays Ghost of Lies and Slanders of Violence About Soviet Rule and Its Aims..." *(NY Call)* [March 21, 1919] Initial report in the Socialist Party's New York Call announcing the formation of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau, headed by Ludwig C.A.K. Martens. Announcement of Marten's appointment as the official representative of the Soviet government to the United States was made March 20, 1919, according to the article, with Martens having been informed of the decision by cable "about three months ago" (i.e. at the end of December 1918). Martens attempts to whet the interest of the American capitalist class with a promise of an initial $200 million in purchases, paid up front in gold. Stating that previously Germany had been far and away the largest trading partner of the old Russian regime, in the light of Germany's own economic problems "in a trade sense, as well as in a political sense, Russia is starting anew." On behalf of the Soviet government, Martens seeks a negotiated end to the intervention and blockade of Russia. He declares Soviet Russia to have been the subject of "false and often absurdly silly reports about the nature of the institutions and measures" taken against its opponents, while acknowledging the Soviet government having had to "adopt stern measures against people who continuously and openly plot for a re-enslavement of the Russian workers and who resort to methods of violence in their fight." The article indicates that Martens had forwarded his credentials to the State Department in Washington, DC for decision.

"Letter to S.J. Rutgers in Moscow from unknown New York correspondent 'F.' with note from Ludwig Martens in New York, March 21 & 24, 1919." This is a fascinating handwritten archival document rescued from illegibility, written by an adherent of the Left Wing Section with a name initial "F." (not Fraina) to Seybold Rutgers, in Moscow for the founding of the Communist International. "F." notes that the Socialist Propaganda League had been terminated, replaced by an organized Left Wing Section, which would be transmitting credentials to Rutgers to serve as its delegate to the founding convention. "F." notes that he had asked the "International Relations Committee of the Left Wing Section" for a brief outline history, which is included here in full. This history notes that the Manifesto of the Left Wing had its roots in a February 15, 1919, convention in New York City. A postscript is added by Ludwig Martens noting "Since my appointment with all my heart and soul I am in the work. Doubtless we shall have results very soon." Martens adds that "We need all information in regard to your needs in machinery, supplies, etc. I think we will have the best chances in the world to create here a great organization which will be of greatest use for economical development of Russia."

JUNE 1919

"Stevenson's 'Personally Conducted' Raid: An Editorial in the *New York Call*, June 15, 1919." This editorial from the New York City Socialist Party daily declares that "responsibility for the raid on the Soviet Bureau rests squarely on the shoulders of just one man" -- Archibald Stevenson. "He headed the band of private detectives and state constabulary that invaded the Soviet office. They all took orders from him directly. Every detail of the raid was under his specific direction," the editorialist asserts. Stevenson is revealed as a zealous member of the Union League Club in New York, which had moved that group to action pushing for a broad investigation of radicalism in the state. Stevenson had been appointed chairman of a special committee of that club established for that purpose and had parlayed this position into fame through testimony before the Overman Committee of the United States Senate and a decisive place in the Lusk Committee established by the New York legislature to investigate radicalism in the state. Stevenson had gained a measure of infamy (and a rebuke from Secretary of War Newton Baker) by reading into the testimony a list of 60 names of individuals which he, in his own judgment, proclaimed to be "pro-German," "even though he knew this act would damage them, no matter how false the allegation." The editorialist declares that "What is needed today is not so much a public investigation of the Soviet Bureau -- it has never shunned legitimate investigation -- but a thoroughgoing probe of Archibald E. Stevenson and his underground activities."

"Frameup of Radicals Laid to Lusk Probers by Resigning Aide: Official Translator Quits Post, Asserting Committee Does Not Seek Truth But Tries to Influence and Arouse Public Opinion -- British Secret Service Chief Examined Papers, Is Charge." [June 22, 1919] This article will be of interest to specialists in espionage and counter-intelligence -- a news report from the Socialist Party's *New York Call* reprinting the press release of Feliciu Vexler, a Romanian-born linguist who abruptly resigned his post as a translator for Lusk Committee over what he characterized the "methods of the former Tsars of Russia" being pursued by the committee in their self-proclaimed attempt to "bust up the whole Socialist and radical gang." Vexler charges that British intelligence was working hand in glove with Archibald Stevenson, the driving force of the raid on the Russian Soviet Government Bureau. According to the news report, members of the raiding crew told Vexler frankly that "their purpose in making the raids was not to find the truth, but to 'frame up' a case against all radical groups in New York through the public press, and to show as plausibly as possible that a coordinated movement for the 'overthrow of the government' of the United States exists." Includes Vexler's complete press release and an account of a brief interview conducted with Vexler personally, during which Vexler stated "it appeared to me to be an attempt to 'frame up' certain persons for public obloquy.... Stevenson told me it was his purpose to link together all the various radical movements in an attempt to show that a widespread conspiracy existed by which it was intended to overthrow the government."

"British Provost Marshal Aided Lusk Probers with Documents: Nathan, Who Took Leading Part in Raid, Just a 'Junior' Officer: Head of Organization Says He Furnished Record of Martens but Didn't 'Butt In.'" [June 25, 1919] This article from the *New York Call* follows up on linguist Feliciu Vexler's charge that British intelligence was working with Archibald Stevenson and the Lusk Committee in their raid on the Russian Soviet Government Bureau and their attempt to link various liberal and radical persons and institutions in a grand conspiracy plot. The *Call* reporter went to the office of the British consulate attempting to find a certain "Nathan" on the staff, purported to be the head of British intelligence in America. The reporter ironically interviewed Norman Thwaites, who was ironically William Wiseman's chief intelligence officer in the US. Despite two other employees playing dumb to the reporter, Thwaites

obligingly acknowledged that there was a "junior" of unspecified duties on his staff by the name of Nathan -- actually his top assistant specializing in gathering data on nationalist and radical movements and individuals, Robert Nathan. Thwaites told the reporter he "wasn't sure of Nathan's initials, but thought they were J.R." -- and stated that Nathan had "taken some records concerning L.C.A.K. Martens to the raiders" following the seizure of documents from the RSGB. Thwaites is quoted as saying "this office had nothing whatever to do with the Lusk Committee" and that "this office would not think of butting into such an affair as this. Even if we had been invited to participate -- though, since this is not our business, I don't see why we should have been -- I should have absolutely refused to take part."

JULY 1919

"The Soviet Republic," by Santeri Nuorteva [July 1919] This eloquent defense of the Bolshevik revolution by the Secretary of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau was published in the pages of an American academic journal. Nuorteva states that all the Soviet government wants is an end to military intervention and trade relations. An organized blockade had disrupted not only supplies into the country, but information from the country as well, he states, quoting an unnamed Western press correspondent who told Nuorteva that 95 percent of his telegraph dispatches from Soviet Russia had been intentionally delayed or stopped, particularly those mentioning in any way positive aspects of Soviet construction. The Russian revolution was not a simple matter of personalities taking specific actions, Nuorteva states, but rather a massive sociological upheaval based upon the land question and the peasant nature of the Russian army. He declares that "the peasants just took the land. Whether you approve of it or not, it doesn't matter because you can't change it any more than you can change the course of the sun or the moon." Only the Bolsheviks were willing to accept this reality at face value and to conduct a set of sweeping economic changes which were a logical consequence of the collapse of the land ownership and banking system. Russia was not any more chaotic than the rest of Central and Eastern Europe, Nuorteva states -- indeed, rather stable compared to other nations. Further, it was hypocritical of the press to obsess upon the 3,000 or so killed in the Russian Red Terror when 15,000 had been executed and 10,000 systematically starved to death during the same period by the conservatives in Finland and while the anti-Bolshevik White Army of Kolchak took no prisoners and systematically murdered government officials in villages falling under its control. Victory by Kolchak would mean an exponentially more vicious bloodbath than the rather limited violence practiced by the Bolsheviks, Nuorteva indicates.

AUGUST 1919

"The Martens Affair: Report of CEC Representative Gurin to the 5th Regular Convention of the Federation of Russian Branches, Communist Party of America: Detroit, MI -- Aug. 22, 1919." The published historiographical literature indicates there was bad blood between the Russian Socialist Federation headed by Translator-Secretary Alexander Stoklitsky and Secretary Oscar Tyverovsky and the Soviet Russian Government Bureau in New York headed by Ludwig Martens. Little background has been provided, a crude grasp to expropriate Soviet funds has been intimated. This report by Russian Federation CEC member Gurin to the 5th Convention of the RF presents the full tale of the battle between the Russian Federation and the Martens Bureau for the first time. Rather than a grab for cash, the antagonism between Martens and the RF is depicted as the by-product of a struggle **to submit the one-man managed RSGB to workers' control,** the members of the RF seen as expatriate but fully vested members of the Russian working class abroad. Free of any external supervision and inspection, Martens had made a series of "errors," Gurin states. Particularly galling was the fact that for every staff position at the RSGB, "Martens has appointed either a Right Wing Socialist or an impartial person. You will find there an anti-Bolshevist Nuorteva, Lomonosov, and Mensheviki -- old man [Isaac] Hourwich [father of *Novyi Mir* editor Nicholas, incidentally], who sheds tears at the thought of the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, and the well known [Morris] Hillquit." Gurin continues by noting "We are not against the inviting of bourgeois experts to these jobs. But at the very moment when any blind man could see that any day there might be a break in the Socialist Party, filling vacancies in the local Soviet mission by Right Wing Socialists would mean that the sympathy of the Soviet Bureau was with the Right Wing Socialists in their struggle with the Left. Just think! The representatives of Revolutionary Socialism in the US supports the Right Socialists in their struggle with the Revolutionary Socialists!" After a stream of orators spoke on the question, almost universally expressing condemnation of Martens for failing to submit to workers' control of the activities of his bureau, Martens had been given the last word in the debate, not subject to ordinary time limit. "Comrade Martens in his reply continued to state that he could not fulfill the demands of control over his activity... His opinion was that he as a representative of Soviet Russia had a right to present any demands to the Federation and the Federation must execute them." Martens asked the RF to renounce its demands for supervisory control over the activities of the RSGB. In the reply to debate, reporting CEC member Gurin unleashed a withering barrage at Martens: Martens had thrown representatives of the RF out of his office, had threatened to have his opponents blacklisted in Soviet Russia, had broken his promises, and had refused to submit to the reasonable

authority of the Russian revolutionary socialist movement in America. A resolution was moved declaring that "all the activities of Comrade Martens as a local representative of the Russian worker-peasant government, as well as the activity of the Bureau and its clerks, must be under the complete control of the local Bolshevik (Communist) organizations." This resolution was approved in a massive landslide by the RF, 127 in favor, 8 opposed, and 15 abstaining.

NOVEMBER 1919

"Speech in Celebration of the 2nd Anniversary of Soviet Russia: Park View Place, New York City," by Santeri Nuorteva [Nov. 7, 1919] November 7, 1919, marked the 2nd Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, an event celebrated by mass meetings all over the city of New York and in other American urban centers. One of these gatherings was addressed by Santeri Nuorteva, secretary to Ludwig Martens of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau in New York -- the de facto embassy of Soviet Russia to the United States. A verbatim transcript of this meeting, including Nuorteva's full speech to the gathering, was taken down by a Department of Justice stenographer. Nuorteva indicates an altogether different mood on the 2nd anniversary as compared to the first: "A year ago it required a special enthusiasm, it required a great deal of faith, it required a great deal of conviction to believe and to know that the Russian Soviet Republic was not to go down, that it was to remain in power. Now today we do not need to doubt." Nuorteva indicates that while the blockade was a serious obstacle to the future success of the revolution, the most serious dilemma was the standing need of the Soviet Republic to devote 75% or more of its productive forces to military purposes. To the advantage of Soviet Russia were the contradictions within the imperialist camp, Nuorteva notes, with some Western powers seeking division of the Russian empire into its national constituencies while others sought to back White Russian forces intent upon the maintenance of the multi-national Russian empire. Soviet Russia wanted only one thing, Nuorteva declares: "We want to be left in peace, so that we may concentrate our forces on that work of construction and reconstruction which is before us there. We want to do that, and we are sure that if left alone, if not pestered by all these little dogs that are trying to bite us in the legs, around us, we will be able to show the world that the Russian Workers' Revolution is not a crazy thing, it is not a freak, it is not an invention of 1 or 2 or 3 men, that it really inaugurates an era of a new social order and we want to work it out and it is that very thing which the capitalist class is afraid of."

"Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee of the State of New York to Investigate Seditious Activities (Clayton R. Lusk, Chairman), November 15, 1919." Minutes of a special Saturday session of the Lusk Committee to review the subpoena issued and served by the committee on the previous day to Ludwig Martens of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau and documenting his refusal to appear with the papers demanded of him. Legal action was started against Martens, who was arrested and released on $1,000 bail, after promising to appear before the Lusk Committee the following week (which he did).

DECEMBER 1919

"Letter to Emma Goldman at Ellis Island from Ludwig C.A.K. Martens in New York, December 15, 1919." The head of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau published this open letter to Emma Goldman in the pages of his organization's official organ, Soviet Russia, in an effort to repudiate the "malicious hysteria" that resulted in publication of an "alleged interview with me" in the New York press on the previous day. Martens reassuring Goldman that she and other political exiles from America would be welcomed in Soviet Russia. Of particular interest is Martens' reference to an offer made on behalf of the Soviet government to the US government to provide "free transportation to my country of all Russians in America who want to return there, or whose presence in the United States is not desired by the authorities here."

JANUARY 1920

"Nuorteva Says Spies Helped to Frame Program of Communists." [Jan. 7, 1920] This short news brief from the front page of the *Milwaukee Leader* announces that (1) the Department of Justice had issued a warrant for the arrest for deportation of Ludwig C.A.K. Martens, head of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau in New York; (2) Santeri Nuorteva, secretary to Martens, announced agents of the Department of Justice had actively participated in the formulation of Communist Party platform planks, "which now form the basis of the persecution of thousands of people." Nuorteva also asserted that "we can prove that the chief figures in such celebrated bomb plots were agents of a similar nature" and that the Russian Soviet Government Bureau "would welcome an opportunity to make good these assertions before the proposed Senate investigating committee." Nuorteva also promised to prove the squandering of funds loaned by the American government to the pre-Bolshevik government of Russia "on abominable plots and intrigues."

"Let the Facts Come Out. An Editorial from the *Milwaukee Leader*, Jan. 8, 1920." This *Milwaukee Leader* editorial, probably written by John Work, supports the general theory advanced by Santeri Nuorteva on Jan. 7, 1920, that agents of the Department of Justice had participated in the fabrication of Communist Party planks which were then applied against radicals across America during the Palmer Raids. The editorialist urges a hearing for Nuorteva and Martens and notes the *Leader* "knows the wiles of capitalists and old party officials too well not to have suspected these very activities that are now charged by Nuorteva. In fact, we expressed our suspicion that the bomb plots were concocted for the purpose of creating an excuse to prosecute radicals -- also that there were spies helping to promote the plan to wreck the Socialist Party last spring and summer. We did not have tangible evidence that any particular Left Winger was a spy. But, the suddenness with which the fight was sprung and the terrific campaign of lies that was waged against the Socialist Party indicated that there was a malevolent desire to ruin the usefulness of the party altogether..." There is a definite similarity in the world view of the veteran of the Socialist Party, Nuorteva, and the veteran of the Socialist Party who wrote the editorial -- that American Ultra-Leftism was in measure a machination of the Justice Department intended to destroy American radicalism.

"Government Spies Wrote Planks in Communist Platform, also Laid Bombs, is Charge: Washington Stirred to Depths by Sensational Accusations Against Government Spies -- Russian Republic Representative Demands Full Hearing Before Senate." [Jan. 14, 1920] Article from the pages of the CLP's legal organ, *The Toiler,* detailing the charges made by Santeri Nuorteva of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau that "We have conclusive evidence that agents of the Department of Justice have actively participated in the organization of the Communist Party of America, and that those very planks in the program of the party which now form the basis of the persecution of thousands of people have been drafted and inserted into that platform by such government agents." No commentary on this matter is offered from a Communist Labor Party perspective; instead, an unnamed US Senator is quoted as saying, "If America has emerged from the world war a nest of spies and official plotters against exploited classes at home and against new experiments in government abroad, the American people ought to be informed of it immediately." Nuorteva's full statement to the press of Jan. 6, 1920, is appended to the news article.

SEPTEMBER 1920

"Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on the Case of Louis C. Fraina, Sept. 30, 1920." Full text of a leaflet published in 1920 by the Communist Party of America detailing the absolution of Louis Fraina from charges preferred by Santeri Nuorteva of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau in New York that he was a secret police agent. Two hearings were actually conducted, the first by an investigating committee of three (including CLP member Alexander Bilan) which cleared Fraina of the charge; the second a trial reopening the case at Fraina's request when Nuorteva showed up in Moscow in August 1920. Fraina was again found not guilty of Nuorteva's allegation and Nuorteva was instructed to cease making accusations against Fraina or else "THE GRAVEST MEASURES" would be used "TO STOP HIM." A further resolution was made by ECCI on September 29, 1920, insisting that Nuorteva retract publicly, in the press, all charges made against Fraina.

1921

JANUARY 1921

"Circular Letter on the Closing of the Chicago Office of the Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee from Charles L. Drake." [Jan. 15, 1921] The Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee was the medical relief arm of the Communist-directed Friends of Soviet Russia organization. The group worked hand in glove with the Russian Soviet Government Bureau headed by Ludwig Martens, which served as the official purchasing agent for the fundraising organization. Undercover investigation by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Investigation assured that authorities were well apprised of bitter criticism in the radical community of the ethics and accounting practices of Soviet Russia Medical Relief, charges levied with particular vehemence by the Anarchist-dominated Russian radical movement of the Detroit area. While the BoI believed that the "American Red Star League" organization which emerged in early 1921 was a parallel organization initiated as in response to the improprieties of the Soviet Russian Medical Relief Committee headed by A.M. Rovin and Boris Roustam-Bek, this document reveals an altogether different origin. Rather than an insurgent parallel organization motivated by accountability and fiscal reform, the Red Star League had its roots in the sudden decision of the New York main office to terminate its Chicago, headed by attorney Charles L. Drake. With the deportation of Martens and the shuttering of the Soviet Bureau clearing in the offing, the Soviet Medical Relief organization saw itself as left with no means of transporting its sanitary and medical supplies to Soviet Russia. The determination to shutter the Western Office was abrupt -- two days before Christmas a letter was sent by Secretary Joseph Michael to Drake in Chicago (reprinted here) instructing him to immediately terminate all engagements and close the office. Drake obtained an extension of this deadline to Friday, Jan. 15, 1921, which was the final day of operation of the Western Office of the Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee. The American Red Star League seems to have been launched immediately thereafter, using the same physical office space being abandoned and with Drake taking on the role of Secretary and guiding figure of the new medical relief fundraising organization.

FEBRUARY 1921

"The American Red Star League: First Aid to the Working Class." [circa Feb. 1, 1921] "The ghastly failure of the present organized relief forces to be of any real service to the working class and their official refusal in many cases to help the workers where help is most needed has made necessary the organization of a relief force that will be of, by, and for the working class, and for the working class alone," declares this leaflet of the newly-organized American Red Star League. This group is said to be "organized solely for the purpose of giving relief to members of the working class in acute need, everywhere in the world." While aid to the working class in war ravaged Europe was clearly a priority, the leaflet notes that "such need is not confined to foreign countries. The anti-labor drive which has been begun by the moneyed powers in this country, headed by the United States Steel Corporation and assisted by every Chamber of Commerce, will lead to terrible conflicts and nationwide destitution." The leaflet exhorts recipients to give financial donations to a $10 million Relief Fund: "The workers must be prepared now to aid their own distressed comrades. The want in Europe and Asia is terrible, appalling, and the official relief agencies use the contributions of Americans against the workers who are seeking to control their own governments. We must help them!"

"Soviet Envoy Martens' Farewell Message to America," by Ludwig C.A.K. Martens [Feb. 5, 1921] At the time of his expulsion the de facto Ambassador of Soviet Russia to the United States, Ludwig Martens, takes time to thank the Americans who showed him such "great personal kindness and courtesy." Martens indicates that his departure was "the logical and inevitable consequence of the policy of the American government toward Soviet Russia." For the past 2 years, two American administrations had shown "an absolute refusal to recognize even the de facto existence of the Soviet government, and a refusal to permit the resumption of trade between Russia and America." The US government had adamantly refused to accept any communications which Martens had addressed to it. Martens notes that the Soviet government had "accepted this declaration of the policy of the American government toward Russia and instructed me to close my bureau and to withdraw from the United States without delay." Martens concludes without rancor, stating that "industrial and economic conditions of the world, not excepting America, are such that the resumption of normal economic relations with Russia has become an imperative necessity upon all nations" and that "when the American people are prepared to approach this problem, the government of the Russian workers and peasants will be ready to meet them in a reasonable and friendly spirit."

"Ludwig C.A.K. Martens," by Arturo Giovannitti [Feb. 18, 1921] Lengthy and politically-charged prose poem in honor of the deportation of unrecognized Soviet ambassador Ludwig Christian Alexander Karlovich Martens, written by the noted radical Italian-American labor activist and poet. In Giovannitti's poem Revolutionary Russia is likened to Revolutionary America of 145 years earlier -- but the long-awaited visitor from afar, coming in the name of freedom and liberty has no one to welcome him appropriately, the original American revolutionaries being long dead and replaced instead by tax collectors and policemen and royalty-worshiping bureaucrats and aristocrats. Only the poor and

downtrodden American workers, the "stillborn," are in a position to welcome Martens and his mission and to bid him and that mission an appropriate farewell, "And a clod from the grave of John Brown to spread over the grave of John Reed."

"Statement of Ludwig C.A.K. Martens on the Activities of the Soviet Mission: Moscow -- Feb. 24, 1921." Upon arriving back in Moscow after being forced to leave the United States, former Russian emissary Ludwig Martens summarized the activities of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau which he headed in the Soviet press. Martens retrospectively categorizes the activity of the RSGB into three sections: Information, Commercial work, and Technical work. Martens feels the propagation of information about Soviet Russia had been successful, as had the development of technical information and assistance for his country. Commercial work was a mixed bag, in Martens' estimation, the big failure to open up trade relations being only partially offset by the export of $750,000 worth of goods from Soviet Russia and by the execution of a number of successful purchase orders. Martens also emphasizes the importance of having made contact with the 3 million member Russian colony in America, the mass of which were "undoubtedly supporters of Soviet Russia." Martens concludes that it is his conviction "that our return to America will take place in the very near future. The program put forward by the Republicans during the Presidential election contained a paragraph demanding the resumption of trade relations with all countries with which America is not in a state of war. This of course applies to Soviet Russia. I think that as soon as Harding becomes President of the USA, Soviet Russia will be given the opportunity of opening the necessary negotiations."

"The American Red Star League $10,000,000 Relief Fund to Save the Women and Children of Soviet Russia: A leaflet of the American Red Star League." [leaflet, circa Feb. 1921] This leaflet by the new American Red Star League, a left wing rival medical relief organization to the American Red Cross, presents much of the case made by Irwin St. John Tucker in a longer pamphlet published by the Red Star League at about the same time. "Confronted with the terrific destitution in Europe as a result of wars and blockades, the working class of America has been asked to give generously for the relief of suffering in those countries. Millions of dollars have been raised in America for the relief of Europe. How much of this money has actually been of service to the working class? Two MILLION dollars' worth of medical supplies desperately needed in Russia were burned by the American Red Cross in the Crimea to prevent it falling into the hands of the Workers' Government. Supplies to the value of 10 MILLION dollars were allowed to rot at Archangel because the Red Cross would not permit the starving and dying Russians to use them." Capitalist machinations in Russia, Hungary, Austria, Italy, and elsewhere had given a political coloration to the Red Cross' work, while "under the leadership of Herbert Hoover a joint committee of relief organizations has been formed, which is openly using the funds collected for anti-labor propaganda," the leaflet asserts. In response to this ideological orientation of the American Red Cross, the American Red Star League had been formed. "THE AMERICAN RED STAR LEAGUE is organized as First Aid to the Working Class in every country. Our first and most pressing duty is to save the women and children of Soviet Russia!" the leaflet declares. Financial contributions to the organization for its work are solicited.

"30,000 Babies Starving!! A leaflet of the American Red Star League," by Charles L. Drake [circa Feb. 1921] This leaflet of the new American Red Star League makes use of a cable of the American Friends' Service Committee from Moscow highlighting the shortage of milk, cod liver oil, and soap in Moscow which had resulted in an infant mortality rate estimated at an astronomical 40%. "America's warehouses are full to bursting with good things. Let us send them to Russian babies! In the name of Humanity, ACT NOW!" the leaflet implores, noting that a $10 donation "will save 10 Russian babies."

MARCH 1921

"Martens Files Libel Suit Against the Washington *Post*." [event of March 2, 1921] Around the first of March, 1921, claims were made in the Washington *Post* against head of the Russian Soviet Government Bureau, Ludwig Martens, charging that he he was a member of the American Communist Party, had directed secret organizations aiming at the overthrow of the American government, had associated with and incited criminal anarchists, and that he was himself a German revolutionist. The *Post* additionally editorialized in favor of delivering Martens "over to the tender mercies of Noske, who knows how to deal with Sparticides, Bolsheviki, and their ilk." Martens responded through his lawyer, former Senator Hardwick, who hired additional counsel in order to bring suit against the *Post*. "Their contention is that the above and other allegations by the Post are utterly false and are refuted by the official record of the Senate hearings,"

this news account from the Socialist press declares. The *Post's* editorial offensive against Martens was seen as part of a final effort by an increasingly desperate Department of Justice and the Lusk Committee of New York to justify their policy of repression of Martens and his Soviet Government Bureau in New York.

"L.A.K. Martens Not Deported; Allowed to Go: Former Labor Secretary Now Gives New Explanation," by Laurence Todd [March 22, 1921] This article distributed by the Federated Press notes that former Soviet representative in the United States Ludwig Martens had not been deported, as was implied in the press, but rather had been permitted to depart under his own volition and at his own expense. The article quotes outgoing Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson as saying in his defense, "The decision against Martens did not end Martens' legal resources. He could still have recourse to the courts on habeas corpus proceedings. Under such circumstances it would have been months before Martens could have been deported, if at all. Consequently the Secretary of Labor permitted Martens to leave the United States without executing the deportation warrant on condition that he would leave not later than Jan. 22, 1921, and proceed to Russia at his own expense instead of at the expense of the United States."

The URL of this page is http://www.marxisthistory.org/subject/usa/eam/rsgb.html